

November 29, 2023

**Meeting Minutes of the Governance Council**Wednesday, November 29, 2023 1:30-3:30pmRoom 708, Auditorium; Chair: Glen Johnson

**Call to Order and Approval of the Minutes**

Glen Johnson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm. He requested and received approval of minutes from the October 18, 2023 meeting.

**Vote on HPAM 644/844**

Glen called for a motion to hold the vote to approve the creation of HPAM 644/844 as a new cross-listed course offering. The course was approved with thirty-eight (38) yes votes, zero (0) no votes, and one (1) abstention.

**Committee on Equity and Inclusion Election**

Glen tabled the election for a non-tenure track faculty representative to the Committee on Equity and Inclusion, pending the nomination of an eligible faculty member.

**Dean’s Report**

Dean Ayman El-Mohandes welcomed everyone back from the Thanksgiving break and shared that the 2023 Annual Report has been published. He encouraged attendees to take a copy on the way out. Ayman then highlighted a few takeaways from the report. Regarding students, there has been steady enrollment growth in recent years, excellent graduation rates (especially at the doctoral level), and positive alumni outcomes after graduation. SPH continues to recruit a diverse student body. Regarding faculty, 90% of students evaluated their professor as excellent, very good, or good, and we maintain a strong student-to-faculty ratio of 10:1. Regarding research, there has been steady and significant growth in research revenue (from ~ $6 million in 2017 to nearly $33 million in 2023). Regarding finances, the tax levy budget for 2022-2023 was $35 million, with 80% of funds coming from New York State (at 56%) and tuition (at 24%). Ayman noted that CUNY SPH is growing and increasing spending in new areas such as external affairs, marketing, and communication, which adds new burdens to the budget. Ayman stressed that our budget is in good shape and that we have been able to grow in many areas in fiscally sound ways, which is not the case university-wide.

Ayman turned to CUNY Central updates, noting that CUNY has a structural deficit due to nine colleges being in severe deficit. The university is implementing a system-wide savings plan, where colleges must set aside 5% of the budget toward savings. Possibly, the Legislature will approve a tuition increase to address CUNY’s substantial deficit, but this remains to be seen. The added financial stress has affected CUNY SPH in specific ways, such as the Vacancy Review Board, reduced adjunct hiring, ECP furloughs, and supplementing our budget with spending for scholarships, new faculty start-up funds, and rent for the 8th floor from indirects from the Dean’s 9th ledger account. It is possible that further cuts system-wide could be instituted; one example is not replacing faculty and staff who leave or retire. Susan Klitzman shared recent student data enrollment data (by FTE) and fiscal reports for the last three academic years among all CUNY colleges.

Finally, Ayman spoke on the School’s global research agenda. Terry McGovern is leading a process to develop a strategic evaluation of our global efforts in both research and academic programs. She is working with a group of faculty to explore and redefine our research portfolio and course content for the MS degree in Global and Migrant Health Policy, with an expected proposal in the spring. As part of the School’s global research agenda and an outcome in our Strategic Plan, Nevin Cohen and Kathleen Cravero have worked to expand and develop international partnerships. Ayman added that it is crucial we have a more dynamic database in Watermark. To address this, Terry and Nevin will lead an effort, and hire a doctoral student to assist in populating Watermark. Ayman asked that faculty, chairs, and directors provide data and continual updates on global health research initiatives since a rich and current database is essential in informing our global research strategy and academic program.

Suzanne McDermott asked Ayman about the grant portion, how much money from research is retained by the School, and what it is used toward. Ayman noted that 50% of the grant funds are retained by the School, with federal grants representing 49% of funds for the 2022-2023 academic year. Ayman noted that money from this fund is used toward SPAR, student scholarships, and rent costs.

**Admissions Committee Report**

*Ghada Soliman, Curriculum Committee Chair*

Ghada Soliman shared the latest Admissions Committee report and asked that faculty review applications as quickly as possible, highlighting that the spring admissions deadlines are approaching. Ghada stressed that scholarships cannot be disbursed until the application is reviewed; she highlighted scholarship opportunities listed on our website that can be shared with students. Renee Goodwin asked about the scholarship funding sources, and Ghada reviewed the sources of those posted to the website. Next, Ghada shared updates on the remaining fall and winter recruitment events. Chris Palmedo suggested we discuss recruiting and marketing at a future GC meeting, and ways that faculty can support these initiatives.

Finally, Ghada shared information on the upcoming *All of Us* Database Workshop on March 6th, a program that invites one million people across the US to help build a diverse health database. Participants are welcomed from all backgrounds, with an aim to accelerate health research and medical breakthroughs.

**Curriculum Committee Report**

*Sean Haley, Curriculum Committee Chair*

Sean Haley noted that the revised five core syllabi have been submitted to CEPH, and we will begin implementing the updated content in spring 2024. Sean thanked both the Curriculum Committee and the individual team members who worked tirelessly to bring together the core revisions.

**Associate Deans’ Reports**

*Terry McGovern, Senior Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs*

Terry McGovern thanked Sean for his work on the Curriculum Committee and shared recent updates to global health initiatives at the School, noting that our global work fulfills a particular niche. Terry shared that an initiative on ending gender-based violence previously housed at Rutgers will be moving to CUNY. Additionally, CUNY SPH will be launching the Byllye Avery Sexual and Reproductive Health and Justice Endowed Professorship and Campaign with an on-campus event in December that will include a discussion with Byllye Avery, Terry McGovern, and Lynn Roberts, moderated by Chelsea Clinton. Sumana Chandra noted there will be limited space and the event will be live-streamed virtually for those unable to attend in person. Terry shared that Sara Ingram will be working with her office part time, and welcomed her support. Next, Terry invited Nick Freudenberg to speak on the CUNY CARES launch on November 28th. Nick briefly gave an overview of the initiative and noted that we’re looking for faculty to join and assist with future activities. Ayman noted that Nick helped to usher in this program and thanked Nick for his leadership and perseverance. Finally, Terry shared that she’s on the COACHE task force and will share updates when available.

*Susan Klitzman, Senior Associate Dean of Administration*

Susan Klitzman provided updates on the holiday schedule: the physical campus will be closed from 12/25 through 12/29, with work operating remotely. Susan added that from New Year’s through the start of the spring semester, the SPH campus will be open Monday through Thursday, 8am to 6pm.

Michelle Finn shared that SPH will need to install XDR (a security software) on SPH-tagged laptops and remote desktops. An email will be sent out to the community with instructions to book an appointment (in person or virtual) to have the software installed.

*Michele Kiely, Associate Dean of Student Affairs & Alumni Relations*

Michele Kiely shared that December 1st is the deadline for PSC CUNY awards (small grants) and that the applications need to be submitted directly by faculty. Michele added that effort certification is now open and encouraged faculty to submit as soon as possible. Finally, Michele noted that in March, a team science workshop is being hosted at SPH, which will be open to all of CUNY. Diana Romero asked about the workshop, and Michele elaborated that it encourages cross-collaboration through CUNY. Karen Florez attended in the past and noted that it was useful.

*Lynn Roberts, Associate Dean of Student Affairs & Alumni Relations*

Lynn Roberts shared a few announcements. She welcomed the new CHSS student representative on the GC, Josh Levine. Lynn noted that we are still looking for a representative from the Advanced Certificate program, which has been challenging due to the short duration students are enrolled in the 15-credit program. Lynn shared that we recently hosted a Transgender Day of Remembrance at the Graduate Center in a hybrid format that was well attended. Additionally, we will be hosting an alumni meetup on December 14th, as well as Paws for the Cause, a pet therapy event for both on-campus and remote students. On the Admissions side, Lynn added that the scholarships have been particularly helpful in student recruitment.

Lynn welcomed Zaire Ali, President of GSGA, to share updates. Zaire noted that the GSGA now has a full board, including a Communications Officer, who will help with emails and social media outreach. He encouraged the community to reach out if they need promotional materials shared with the study body. For finals week, the GSGA will host a relaxation week with open office hours available for students. Finally, the GSGA is hosting a fall/winter retreat to plan for spring semester events.

**Other Business**

Jean Grassman provided an update on PSC union initiatives, reminding the GC that she serves with Luisa Borrell as SPH delegates to the union. Jean noted that PSC is a unique union with roughly 25k members including faculty, staff, and part-time labor. The union is currently in contract negotiations (with roughly ten sessions so far), which is a long, formal process. Jean encouraged members to attend a bargaining meeting as well as a rally (“Sing Out Shout Out”) on Saturday near Governor Houchl’s office in support of more funding for CUNY.

Mary Schooling and Heidi Jones led a discussion on the use of ChatGPT and AI in the classroom. The GC broke off into small groups to discuss, and then reconvened and shared their discussion points. Sean recommended professional development workshops at the School around AI usage both in the classroom and in research. Ayman tasked Rosemary Farrell to look into professional development opportunities on AI and share at the next GC meeting. Pedro Mateu-Gelabert discussed engagement opportunities around AI, academic fears around cheating, and ways to restructure assignments to make them more personalized. Malika Christopher noted that ChatGPT and other AI tools have been useful as a student. Ayman discussed inaccuracies in ChatGPT-generated content and the possibilities for misinformation. Nevin added that AI may become an important tool in certain curricula, such as within the informatics program.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Glen adjourned the meeting at 3:35 pm.

Minutes submitted by Matt Paczkowski